



35th District • State Representative

# Fred Finn

## 2010 Legislative Report

**Serving all of Mason  
County, and parts of  
Kitsap, Grays Harbor,  
& Thurston counties**

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Energy & Communications –  
(Vice-Chair)  
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Audit Review & Oversight  
Joint Committee on Veterans  
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Washington Tourism  
Commission

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- **Funding for:**
  - Belfair bypass
  - Potlatch municipal wastewater project
  - Rural counties drug task forces
- **Taxes Q&A**

Dear neighbor:

As your state representative, I want to keep you informed about what's going on in your state Legislature, and how it may affect you and your family.

The 2010 session has now concluded. After careful deliberation and spirited debate, the Legislature passed what I believe is a responsible budget. It includes a \$757 million revenue package (please see details on the back page of this newsletter).

I voted against suspension of I-960 earlier this year, which was the 2/3 requirement to raise taxes. Many of you contacted me with strong feelings one way or the other about this, and I want to thank you for being engaged in the process. Although I was not in favor of suspending I-960, I was a "yes" vote on the final budget that passed the Legislature, which included new revenue. While I realize my decision to vote in favor of the budget won't please everyone, you should also know that:

- The budget includes far more in cuts than in new revenue; in fact, for every \$1 in revenue raised we cut over \$4.50 in spending. This is the first budget since 1951 that is smaller than the previous one.
- Without a compromise agreement on revenue the Governor would have been left with little alternative but to make 20% across-the-board cuts, which she threatened to do. It would have meant thousands of teachers losing their jobs, class size increases in our public schools, cuts to prisons and public safety, closures of our state parks, and tens of thousands of seniors, disabled, and other vulnerable populations without a safety net. I could not support that level of cuts.

There is, however, plenty of good news. Read on about job creation that is coming to our district, and good news about important programs and projects that will receive much-needed funding. Please don't hesitate to contact me, and thank you again for the opportunity to serve you.

Best wishes,

Fred Finn  
State Representative  
35<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

**Fred FINN – 35th District State Representative**

# Rep. Fred Finn 35th Legislative District

## Job Creation

The Legislature passed the Jobs Act of 2010, a plan to create 30,000 jobs across the state by putting our construction industry back to work. Public school buildings from Elma to Bremerton are in dire need of energy-efficiency upgrades, but cash-strapped school districts aren't able to pay for them. This bill would permit the state to sell bonds to finance these energy upgrades, which include projects like updating heating/cooling systems and replacing single-pane windows. The energy savings would end up saving the state – and taxpayers – money.

The passage of the Jobs Act is a first step, but voters will have the final say this fall. Whether you are in favor of this plan or not, you will have the opportunity to vote yes or no on it.



*Despite serving on seven committees and commissions, Rep. Fred Finn did not miss a single floor vote.*

In February of this year Adage LLC, a startup energy company, unveiled plans to build a power plant in Shelton that would turn wood waste from timber operations into electricity. 700 direct and indirect much-needed construction jobs would be created during the next two and a half years, with several hundred full-time jobs once the plant is operational. Some questions have been raised about the project and its potential environmental

impact; those questions will be addressed in the federal, state, and local permitting process.

## Belfair Bypass Moves Forward

The long battle to ease congestion through the city of Belfair scored a major victory this session with the announcement that the 2010 Supplemental Transportation Budget would include \$750,000 for necessary environmental assessments on the Belfair bypass project.

Although the amount is only a small part of what will be necessary to fund the bypass itself, the project cannot move forward without these assessments. For a while, it appeared that state funds would not be available this year for the project, but as a member of the House

Transportation Committee I pushed to include it in the budget. We must continue to make progress on the bypass, because in my conversations with citizen and community groups I hear the cynicism and frustration they feel forty years after the need for the bypass was first identified in a Washington State Department of Transportation study. This is a major priority for me and I was pleased to work closely with other representatives of the 35th District to take this step forward.



*Are we any closer to building the Belfair Bypass? After this year's session, I am happy to say the answer is yes.*

## Salmon Enhancement/Hatchery News

We were fortunate in getting important language inserted in this year's state budget, which should mean more funding for salmon enhancement groups, better protection of the environment and larger donations to local food banks.

State hatchery managers are now being directed to



work with nonprofit fisheries enhancement groups, local food banks, and others to determine if salmon resources are being utilized in a way that maximizes potential revenues from the sale of surplus salmon.

The state currently contracts pickup of surplus salmon to a private company, which processes some of it into fillets for local food banks to distribute. Last year, the company returned about \$65,000 back to the state to further fund fisheries enhancement groups. Independent studies suggest this amount could be much higher.

A report from the state Hatchery Division is due back to the Legislature by November 1 of this year.



# 2010 Legislative Report

## Clean Water. Healthy Sound

The Potlatch municipal wastewater treatment project is vital not only for those who live in the surrounding community, but for the health of Puget Sound (which, ultimately, affects all of us). In order to protect our environment and public health, the federal government is providing \$3.6 million towards the completion of this project. However, those dollars have a state matching requirement, which means we had to come up with \$1.65 million on our end.

The great news is that the final state construction budget included this money. Those state dollars, combined with the money from the federal government, will enable the Potlatch wastewater treatment project to be finished.

## More Transportation News

As a member of the Transportation Committee, I worked for passage of a major transportation budget which provides for important new ferries as well as job opportunities throughout the district. The pontoons for the floating bridge will be constructed in Grays Harbor, for example. This session we reaffirmed that commitment and added significant funds for designing the next generation of ferries.

## A Word About State Employees

Our district is home to many state employees, among them teachers, corrections officers, nurses, and caseworkers. One of the most difficult votes I took this year was to help close the state budget gap by imposing temporary furloughs on state employees.

State employees are hard-working people who have been asked to do more with less in recent years. They are not responsible for the worldwide recession that caused the budget woes facing 48 out of 50 states. And yet, they are being asked to sacrifice much in order to help all of us out of this recession. State employees have seen no cost-of-living raises in five of the past ten years. They are paying an additional \$1100 per family in health care costs this year, and now many of them will experience salary cuts in the form of furloughs. Nobody can say that our public employees are not doing their part to share the pain.

## Rural Drug Task Forces Funded

\$1.5 million is now in the state budget for drug task force efforts in rural counties such as Grays Harbor. The program's budget was originally reduced by half in anticipation of federal funding; however, the funding did not end up materializing and the program – which is currently active in 13 counties – could not continue without it.

Why is this program so important? Crime rates have decreased twice as much in counties where these task forces exist versus other counties. The reason for the decrease is simple – drug enforcement also addresses other crimes, such as theft and burglary, that drug addicts commit to support their habit.

I am pleased to report that the \$1.5 million in funding will allow these task forces to continue to operate in our rural counties, and make up for the previous budget reduction.

The budget also includes funding for the assessment and cleanup of meth production sites. These sites pose environmental and public health risks, and bring down neighborhood property values, so getting them cleaned up is a priority.



Photo courtesy of the Drug Enforcement Agency.

*The final state budget also included funds specifically for assessment and cleanup of meth production sites, which will help make our neighborhoods and communities safer.*

# Rep. Fred Finn 35th Legislative District

## The Revenue Package – Q & A


### Q: What's it going to cost me?

- A: The revenue package includes new taxes on beer, soda, gum, candy, cigarettes and bottled water, some of them temporary. These are discretionary items and by not purchasing them you avoid paying a few cents more in taxes. Here are some examples:
- Beer: 4.7 cents per bottle or can. Microbrews exempt. (Note: the microbrew exemption was included to protect Washington jobs. Nearly all Washington-brewed beers are microbrews).
  - Soda: 2 cent tax per 12-oz. bottle or can, or the equivalent of \$7 per year for the average Washington family.
  - Candy & Gum: 6.5% state sales tax now applies, adding a few cents to a pack of gum or candy bar.
  - Bottled water: 6.5% state sales tax now applies, adding a few cents per bottle.

### Q: Do these taxes pay for new government programs?

- A: No. They “buy back” cuts made in the Governor’s proposed budget that would have been devastating to Washington’s families. Here are some examples of what we DO NOT have to cut thanks to the revenue package:
- Health care for 16,000 children
  - Health care for 60,000 adults who are on the state’s Basic Health Plan

- College financial aid for 12,000 students
  - Home care services for 42,000 seniors and disabled adults, allowing them to remain in their homes rather than go into institutions
  - Meals on Wheels for thousands of seniors
  - Smaller class sizes for Kindergarten through 4th grade students, and Early Learning funding
- Q: The revenue package includes a temporary B&O tax increase on selected service industries. Won't higher taxes drive businesses out of Washington?**
- A: Washington is already considered one of the top states for business.
- Forbes ranked us the #2 state in the country for business; US News and World Report ranked us the #1 place to start a business.
  - This year the Legislature doubled the small business tax credit; businesses making up to \$80K will actually pay less.
  - 48 states are facing budget shortfalls this year and at least 33 of them have raised taxes in response, underscoring that the recession is affecting the entire country, not just Washington.
  - Our state is predicted to be one of the top five states to lead the country out of the recession, meaning forecasters continue to be confident about Washington’s business climate.

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**Fred Finn**  
Representative

**Report to the 35th District**

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